

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 03205 101311Z

46

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 /046 W

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P R 101205Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3744

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PAIRS

CINCPAC

USSAG-NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3205

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LA

SUBJ: FUTURE OF FAR OFFICERS

1. IN OUR MAY 10 CONVERSATION REPORTED SEPTEL FIN MIN
NGON SANANIKONE ALSO ASKED ME WHAT WOULD BE U.S. ATTITUDE
TOWARDS HARD-CORE FAR OFFICERS WHO WOULD REFUSE TO STAY
IN ARMED FORCES DOMINATED BY PATHET LAO AND START RESISTANCE
MOVEMENT ("PRENDRE LE MAQUIS"). MOST SENIOR OFFICERS NGON
SAID, WOULD RESIGN AND GO INTO EXILE; SOME WOULD COOPERATE
WITH NEW REGIME; BUT CERTAIN OFFICERS (NOTABLY GENERALS
VANG PAO, ETAM AND CHAO SINH) PLANNED TO RESIST, BECAUSE
THEY WERE UNDOUBTEDLY ON PATHET LAO ENEMY LIST AND THEY HAD
NO ASSETS ABROAD.

2. ACCORDING TO NGON, VANG PAO WOULD ENGAGE IN GUERRILLA
WARFARE AGAINST THE LPF. ETAM AND CHAO SINH PLANNED TO
TAKE UP GUERRILLA WARFARE WITH AN ESTIMATED 4,200 SOLDIERS
IN THE VANG VIENG AREA, SOME IN COMPLETE UNITS AND SOME
INDIVIDUALS. ALL OF THESE ORIGINALLY CAME FROM SAM NEUA
PROVINCE. BECAUSE THEY HAD FLED THE PATHET LAO AND FOUGHT
THEM, THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT. "IT WAS TRUE THEIR
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 03205 101311Z

CAUSE WAS PROBABLY HOPELESS BUT IT WAS BETTER TO FIGHT THAN

TO WAIT DUMBLY TO GO TO THE SCAFFOLD". NGON HAD TALKED WITH ETAM AT LENGTH THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, ETAM WAS SEEKING AMMUNITION.

3. I SAID THAT WE HAD GREAT SYMPATHY FOR THE SITUATION CONFRONTING THESE OFFICERS BUT I THOUGHT CONDUCTING GUERRILA WARFARE PRETTY HOPELESS AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SINCE SUCH AN ACTION WOULD SIMPLY HARDEN PL ATTITUDES, AND COULD ONLY CAUSE FURTHER SUFFERING AND LOSS OF LIFE. I SUGGESTED IT WAS WISER TO ATTEMPT TO REACH THAI MILITARY TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF SETTLING IN NORTHERN THAILAND. IN ANY CASE, NO ONE SHOULD TRY ANY EXTRAVAGANT ACTIVITY IN VIENTIANE WHICH WOULD CAUSE A REAL TRAGEDY. NGON SAID SUCH AN INCIDENT WAS ALWAYS POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE DESPAIR MANY FAR OFFICERS FELT.

4. COMMENT: TO ALL EVIDENCE MOST SENIOR OFFICERS ARE INDEED PLANNING TO LEAVE. GIVEN FAR'S PAST PERFORMANCE AND LIMITED RESOLVE, WE ALSO DOUBT ANY RESISTANCE MOVEMENT COULD LONG BE SUSTAINED. NEVERTHELESS, IN OUR VIEW, PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST DANGEROUS POSSIBILITY IN THIS OVERCHARGED ATMOSPHERE IS FOR ONE OR MORE DESPERATE OFFICERS TO LEAD SOME TERRORIST ACTION AGAINST PL CHIEFS IN VIENTIANE. WE ARE ALIVE TO THIS POSSIBILITY AND WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO STOP ANY SUCH ACTION.
CHAPMAN

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